

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4624

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1216

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, EG, IS

SUBJ: ISRAELI SIEGE OF EGYPTIAN THIRD ARMY

1. WE DOUBTLESS ARE SEEING ONLY PIECES OF THE PUZZLE, BUT SUCH PIECES AS WE DO SEE LEAD ME TO A SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT THE APPARENT INTENTION OF THE ISRAELIS TO FORCE THE SURRENDER OF THE EGYPTIAN THIRD ARMY BY CUTTING OFF WATER AND OTHER SUPPLIES. NOT ONLY DOES THIS SEEM AT BEST A QUESTIONABLE COURSE OF ACTION UNDER THE TERMS OF THE TWO SC CEASEFIRE RESOLUTIONS, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY IT COULD WELL FRUSTRATE HOPES WE MAY HAVE FOR THE NEXT AND CRITICAL PHASE OF THE PEACE-MAKING PROCESS. WE HERE HAVE LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT SADAT'S CURRENT STRENGTH AND STANDING, BUT IT REQUIRES LITTLE IMAGINATION TO PREDICT WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO IT IF THIS ARMY IS FORCED INTO HUMILIATING SURRENDER, WITH LOSS OF ALL ITS EQUIPMENT, ETC. WE COULD FIND, JUST AS THE NEGOTIATING PERIOD WAS TO BE ENTERED UPON, THAT THERE WAS NO EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT CAPABLE OF NEGOTIATING. AS THE DUTCH AMBASSADOR COMMENTED TO ME THIS MORNING, THE ISRAELIS WOULD NO DOUBT PROTEST LOUDLY IF THEY WERE PRESSED TO ALLOW THE EGYPTIAN FORCE TO REMAIN IN BEING, BUT UNLESS THAT HAPPENS THE CHANCES OF A CONSTRUCTIVE RESULT OF ALL THIS SEEM MUCH DIMMER.

DAY

CONFIDENTIAL

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